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Editor's notes...



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** SouthWoodFord.

I hope everyone has managed to navigate this second lockdown without too much trouble, as we now come through the other side of it.

The hope is now that families can be with their loved ones this festive season without too many restrictions - no one should be alone at this time of year.

I think life at the moment can be especially isolating for business owners, who are most likely trying to climb over the biggest hurdles they've ever faced. I must say, we local businesses are doing ourselves proud - I'm not saying we're all thriving, but we're surviving, and that's admirable.

As a fellow business owner, I always make myself available for a chat. Whether you're looking for someone to bounce ideas off or merely fancy a general conversation, it's always good to put your heads together and see what others are up to.

Network is net-worth, after all.

Times are tough, but it's important to know that we're not alone. In my most difficult moments, I always take a step back and think: we're in a storm right now, and no sailor ever became good by sailing in calm seas. This experience will harden us and make us more creative.

Thank you so much to all our readers and loyal clients - as with every year, you've been fantastic. I hope everyone has a great Christmas.

Brett



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At 77 years young, Joe Biden's journey to the White House has been a long one, but the US Presidential Election winner won't delay in attempting to bring back together a fractured nation.

After a tumultuous four years as the most powerful man in world politics, it perhaps shouldn't have come as too much of a surprise to find Donald Trump refusing to go quietly in the aftermath of a US Presidential Election defeat that left Democrat Joe Biden at the door of The White House... albeit without a set of keys.

Republican Trump's assertion of ballot box fraud in light of what, admittedly, even his fiercest critic would deem a farcical voting process, will mean the intricacies of the November 3 election will play out in the Supreme Court. And yet, where US politics is concerned, we shouldn't be surprised – four years ago all similar accusations of malpractice were shot across the bow by those same Democrats who are now up in arms over Trump's claims. His suggestion was that thousands of new voting papers were added to the mix, that some were in the name of people long deceased, and that many duplicated votes were received after a chaotic postal vote system that allowed individual states to decide their own rules.

When the dust settles, however, 77-year-old Biden will be inaugurated as the leader of the free world. A lifetime ambition, the Pennsylvania-born former lawyer has been at the forefront of politics for well over five decades, having become a senator in January 1973. Re-elected six times, he was vice president to Barack Obama for eight years, and considered running in 2016, but made way for Hillary Clinton.

He is a passionate advocate of raising the minimum wage and investing in green energy, notably in rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement that Trump controversially left. He promotes criminal justice reform and grants for minority communities, and will also look to expand Obamacare, enlarge the free college system, and challenge China's questionable environment and trade practices. And, most notably, he brings with him to the top table of world politics Kamala Harris, America's first female, first black and first South Asian vice president.

Here in Britain we will look on with interest to see if prime minister Boris Johnson can configure the same buoyancy, trust and commercial parallels he enjoyed with Trump. Our long-term alignment with the States on corporate, social and political levels has been essential for the economy, and now more than ever before the government will be seeking reassurance that this can continue under a new regime.

Despite a desperately narrow winning margin, Joe Biden will enter The White House having achieved the most votes ever for an incoming president – more than 77 million. And yet those celebrating the supposed new dawn of American politics should be wary. Putting aside the somewhat ambitious legal claims that will fill the scrolling new tickers over the coming weeks and months, it remains the case that, even in defeat, Trump's vote total was more than any other elected president in history, Obama included. The brand of confrontational, partisan politics that he popularised continues to resonate with America, and with the Senate still under the control of the Republicans, Biden knows he'll have to fight hard to steady the United States' uneasy global reputation.

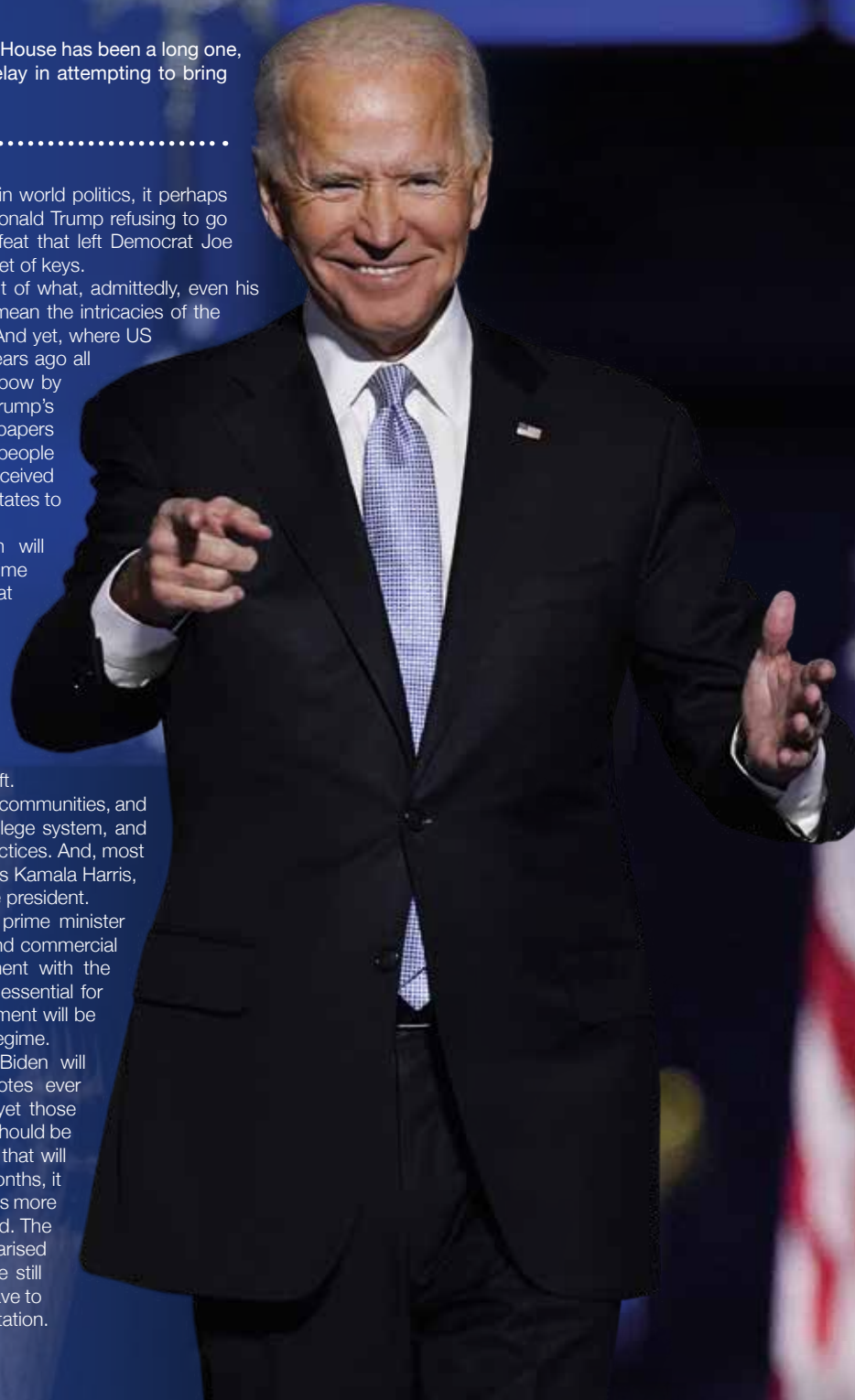


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BIDEN: His Time

THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 2

In the second of our environmental series that looks at the key drivers in the health and well-being of the planet, we're looking at the legacy of our rainforests.

At the end of the 1980s, the realisation that the world's rainforests were being removed at an alarming rate truly propelled a green revolution – one that continues to thrive today.

Where eco awareness and the preservation of our planet are now a part of everyday life, the way we embraced the saving of the Amazon rainforests had never before been seen.

The realisation that deforestation was claiming an area the size of 20 football pitches every minute – for the acquiring of timber and repurposing of land for cattle ranching – was profound, but the deafening screams of those early environmentalists are now just faint murmurs. So what has happened to those green expanses?

Sadly, the problem still exists. A quarter of the Amazon has disappeared, probably never to return, while some speculation suggests the remainder may be felled within 50 years if tighter restrictions are not forthcoming.

Globally, one in four people depends directly on forests for their livelihood, and as many as 120 prescription drugs worldwide are derived directly from rainforests.

And yet, there are two sides to every story. Many South Americans will point to the economic necessity of monetising a natural resource, just as the UK has done with oil and gas. Even the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro has called the destruction of these plant- and animal-rich expanses “cultural”; and in a country that has more than 20 million people living in poverty, it's not difficult to see why resistance is strong.

To conclude, it seems that while the days are gone where almost every other charitable programme was driven towards preserving these incredible habitats, it's simply a case of having our attention diverted to other ills. Three decades after we first reached out to our rainforests, the battle to save them lives on.

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WAYS TO JAZZ UP YOUR Christmas beard



Whether you have designer stubble or a full-on Santa beard, there is no excuse not to get festive when it comes to your facial hair this Christmas. From baubles to bells, sweets to knits, check out these six fantastically festive beard decorations.

1. Beard Baubles: If you want a weird and wacky Christmas beard design, then look no further. Mini baubles hanging from your whiskers will ensure you start trending on social media sooner rather than later.

2. Beard Glitter: A simple yet highly effective idea, a glitter beard will ensure you are the centre of attention for all the right reasons. Simply apply some glitter glue to your beard and then sprinkle with your chosen glitter. Why not use multiple colours for even more oomph?

3. Beard Candy: If you or your kids love candy canes, then this

is the festive beard design for you. Best for bushy beards, all you need to do is adorn your beard with canes and you are good to do.

4. Beard Jingle Bells: For those who don't mind being heard before they are seen, beard bells provide a fun and frivolous way to jazz up your face. Ideal for Christmas carolling.

5. Beard Knits: Does your mum love to make you an annual Christmas jumper? If so, why not ask her this year to knit you a beard warmer instead? It's festive and perfect for keeping out the winter chill.

6. Beard Lights: Last but definitely not least, it wouldn't be Christmas without some well-placed fairy lights, and what better location for these colourful decorations than on your face? Just make sure you buy a clip-on set to avoid a terrible tangle in your bristles.



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DIY UGLY Christmas Jumper

National Ugly Christmas Jumper Day falls on the third Friday of December each year and offers participants the chance to showcase the worst possible festive jumper they can find. However, why not steer clear of the shops this year and make your own original ugly jumper?

COFFEE SHOP UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER
If you love nothing more than a Starbucks first thing in the morning, why not showcase your devotion by sticking a coffee cup directly onto your jumper? Start by cutting your cup in half lengthways and gluing it to the lid. Then glue two pieces of felt to the inside of the cup, glue Velcro tape to the felt and to your jumper and attach.

COUPLES' UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPERS
What could be more cringe than you and your significant other wearing matching garish glittery Christmas jumpers? Using hot glue, stick on sequins that say "Mr" and "Mrs" and then add as much tinsel, glitter and baubles as you can stomach.

LIGHT-UP UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER
Whatever design or slogan you choose for your DIY ugly Christmas sweater, the addition of Christmas coloured fairy lights will only ever make it more tacky. Simply turn your jumper inside out, decide where your battery holder should go and then sew in your LED lights.

SNOW GLOBE UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER
One of the more inventive options. All you need is a plastic bowl, a selection of cheap Christmas decorations and a glue gun to create your very own 3D snow globe on the front of your jumper.

CUTE KIDS UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER
If your children are taking part in national ugly Christmas jumper day, then this DIY Christmas tree jumper is just the ticket. Plus, they can help you make it. All you need is some felt, mini shatterproof baubles, festive beads and hot glue.

Photo credit: ilovetocreate.com, creativefashionblog.com, thesamanthashow.com, brit.co, countryliving.com



FOUR COMMON WINTER AILMENTS AND HOW TO TREAT THEM



As well as the common cold and seasonal flu, not to mention COVID-19, there are several ailments that many people suffer with during the cold winter months. Let's take a closer look at them and their most effective treatments.

1. PAINFUL JOINTS

If you suffer with arthritis, you may find that your joints become even more painful and achy in the colder months. Although there is no way to avoid the effects of the cold completely, ensuring you partake in regular exercise, manage your weight and continue to take any prescribed medication can lessen any pain or discomfort you are experiencing.



2. COLD SORES

If you are prone to cold sores, you may find that you are particularly susceptible in the winter when your immune system is compromised. Try to ensure you get as much rest as possible, keep your lips moisturised and use a topical treatment when needed.



3. ASTHMA

The dry and cold air in winter can make the symptoms of asthma worse by irritating your airways and causing your muscles to spasm, resulting in loss of breath. You can counteract this by limiting your time outside, wearing a scarf when you do go out and always having an asthma action plan in place.



4. SINUS INFECTIONS

If you have a weakened immune system, are a smoker or suffer with seasonal allergies, you are more likely to suffer with sinus infections. Symptoms include a runny nose, headaches, pain or pressure in your face and a sore throat. Try placing a warm compress on your face, using a decongestant and breathing in steam from a hot shower.

TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING HEALTHY THIS WINTER

- > Eat more fruit and veg
- > Embrace natural daylight
- > Wash your hands regularly
- > Stay hydrated



Christmas

plants that care and cure

There are several plants that are synonymous with Christmas, from the decorative poinsettia, to the “kiss me quick” mistletoe, to the evergreen holly and ivy. However, did you know that each of these plants has its own healing properties?

Holly: Often used to decorate your table for Christmas dinner, in terms of medicinal use, you should only use the leaves of the holly as the berries are poisonous. Holly leaves have been known to treat digestive issues, rheumatism, fever, bronchitis and high blood pressure.

HOW TO TAKE: Dry out your holly leaves, crush and add a few teaspoons to a cup of hot water.

Mistletoe: Either a blessing, or a curse depending on who you are standing in close proximity to, mistletoe has been used for centuries to treat medical conditions such as epilepsy, hypertension, headaches and the symptoms of menopause.

HOW TO TAKE: Only use the leaves and stems as the grains are poisonous. Steep in cold water for 12 hours, strain and drink up to three times a day.

Poinsettia: The perfect plant to decorate your home over Christmas, the poinsettia is known for its ability to clean air, and in particular, to remove formaldehyde from insulation, plastic bags and other household items.

HOW TO TAKE: Simply place a poinsettia in your home and let it work its magic.

Ivy: The leaves of ivy are both anti-inflammatory and anti-rheumatic, plus they contain antioxidant properties. Ivy is also said to help settle your stomach, boost your immune system and increase oxygenation of the body.

HOW TO TAKE: The leaves of ivy can either be consumed or applied topically. To make ivy tea, simply soak 4 fresh ivy leaves or 2 tbsps of crushed dried ivy in 1 litre of cold water, bring to the boil and then filter immediately.



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*Cooking
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treat*

FOOD FINESSE WITH POPULAR CHEF JAMES MARTIN

When James Martin bade an extremely tearful farewell to his *Saturday Kitchen* colleagues in March 2016, it was imagined the chef would be turning his hand to new projects after 10 years fronting the popular BBC weekend cookery show.

Of course, as these things often materialise, the popular Yorkshireman reappeared less than six months later fronting a copycat culinary conflag over on ITV.

Regardless, the 48-year-old's switch to commercial TV has also spawned a run of cookery series, reaffirming his place as one of the most popular chefs on television.

Of course, life on the small screen is already a secondary career for Martin, who excelled with wooden spoon in hand from a young age. Indeed, he was almost asked to leave a cookery class at the age of 12 for serving flambéed chicken and mangetout while his prepubescent classmates struggled to create fairy cakes. He went on to study catering at Scarborough College, coming

top of his class for three consecutive years, and was then offered a job working in London with Antony Worrall Thompson, one of the judges for his final exam.

His accomplishments, however, weren't served up to him on a plate – as a Yorkshireman, Martin was taught from birth that “you don't get owt for nowt”. The hard graft paid off, it seems, as he was made head chef of the first Hotel du Vin in Winchester when he was just 22.

Two years later, he began to appear on our screens in shows such as *James Martin: Yorkshire's Finest* and *Ready, Steady, Cook* – his affable nature and dry, self-deprecating humour making him an instant hit with viewers.

From weekend shows to cooking adventures at home and overseas, the chef's fascination with food is unrelenting, as evidenced in his recent return to our screens for *Saturday Morning with James Martin*.

“It's been a great ride so far,” he says, “and the stove is still warm.”



Photo credit: Ken McKay/ITV/Shutterstock

Let's get Saucy

Even if you pride yourself on making your own roast potatoes and stuffing your own turkey, not many people take the time to make their own sauces for their Christmas dinner.

So, let's change that. Check out these three popular Christmas sauce recipes that are both simple and delicious.

Easy Peasy Bread Sauce

YOU WILL NEED: 600ml milk | 50g butter | 1 onion | 6 cloves | 6 peppercorns | 2 garlic cloves | 1 bay leaf | 3 sprigs of thyme | 100g white breadcrumbs | 4 tbsp single cream | Pinch of nutmeg (optional)

HOW TO MAKE: Simmer the milk, butter, onion, cloves, peppercorns, garlic and herbs in a pan for 15–20 minutes | Strain and return liquid to heat | Add breadcrumbs and simmer for a further 4 minutes | Stir in cream | Season with nutmeg if desired, and serve

Super Simple Cranberry Sauce

YOU WILL NEED: 200g white sugar | 4 cups of fresh or frozen cranberries | 250ml water | Zest of an orange | Optional spices – cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice

HOW TO MAKE: Rinse cranberries | Boil water and dissolve sugar | Add cranberries and simmer on a low heat until most of the berries have burst | Grate in some orange zest and add a small pinch of your preferred spice | Leave to cool

NB: Cranberry sauce will continue to thicken as it cools.

Perfect Turkey Gravy

YOU WILL NEED: 2 chopped onions | 1 large chopped carrot | 1.3 litres stock – preferably turkey, but chicken will do | 3 tbsp plain flour | 5 tbsp white wine | Turkey neck (optional)

HOW TO MAKE: Add the onion, carrot and turkey neck to a pan | Pour in stock and simmer for one hour | Strain to remove the vegetables and meat, then return liquid to pan | Combine flour with white wine and then add to stock | Heat gently until thickened | Season to taste | Leave to cool and chill



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Having children across a broad age spectrum can often be taxing when it comes to keeping them all amused and happy, but here are a few ideas that work right across the board, from tiny toddlers to troublesome teenagers.

Cooking up a treat

Whether baking a cake, preparing a stew for dinner or simply working together to get a few sandwiches on plates, the kitchen has always been a staple for family life (and the odd party).

Cooking creates a true bond among children, not least because they can enjoy the fruits of their labour afterwards.

Scooters, bikes and trikes

From balance bikes to mountain bikes and any sort of wheeled machinery in between, venturing out on a ride is a great way of connecting our kids with the outdoors. Follow an established route, explore a new area, set up a treasure hunt or simply go off-piste into wooded areas – getting outdoors is great fun.



An English country garden

What better way to embrace the best playground of them all than by getting the kids involved in tending to the garden? From mowing the lawn to planting, clearing out the shed or even trimming back the bushes, the view from your window will be all the better for a family afternoon in the yard.



Paint it black

Whether it's throwaway pieces of art on paper or a more serious dollop of paint on canvas to be hung on the wall, being creative makes a fantastic family bond. And because art is subjective, you can tell your competitive brood with absolute sincerity that those Pollock-like splashes of colour that come from your two-year-old are in no way inferior to the Picasso-esque portrait painted by your eldest, the art student.



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THE ORIGINS OF BOXING DAY, DECEMBER 26, EXPLAINED

Our appreciation of Boxing Day in the modern era is, it's fair to say, somewhat different from how it would have been played out by our forefathers. Nowadays it's a date for hangers, sporting events, ridiculously early opening hours at clothes retailers and furniture stores, and the continuation of a blizzard of relatives... some welcome, others less so.

The reason we call it Boxing Day remains somewhat shrouded in mystery. It has been celebrated for almost as long as records go back, and certainly the giving of Christmas 'boxes' has a large part to play in the provenance.

One popular theory dates back to the Middle Ages, when churchgoers would collect money for the poor in alms boxes. These were opened in honour of Saint Stephen, whose feast falls on December 26.

Other records reference Roman tributes to the day, though in the 19th century the tradition

of looking after those less fortunate over the festive period certainly came to the fore. The term appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1832, taken on by the Victorians who embraced the giving of gifts and the looking after of established tradespeople, employees and other service providers, as atonement for a driven and at times brutal regime focused on self-preservation and self-improvement.

What can be certain is that Boxing Day is very much a British tradition. It's unsurprising to see the event celebrated similarly in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, but elsewhere, the US included, it's largely regarded as a second day of Christmas rather than a named day in its own right.

This Christmas, perhaps when it's good for us to reflect on what has been a challenging year, perhaps the pure, selfless, charitable tradition of Boxing Day should return to the fore... but remember to go about your goodly deeds with a glass of something warming.



Banish the brrrr!



If you spend all day every day in the winter months longing to return to the comfort and cosiness of your bed, then you may be interested to find out what the best bed sheets are for winter warmth.

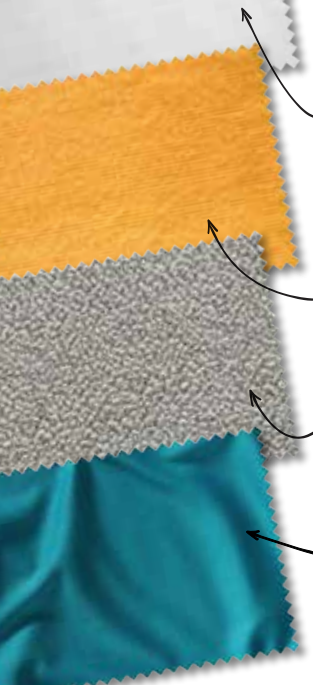
From fleece to flannel, cotton to silk, keep reading to discover what fabric you should choose for your winter safe haven.

Cotton: Although you may think that cotton is more fitting for the summer, if you are the type of sleeper who ends up kicking off your covers halfway through the night, then cotton might be the ideal material for you all year round. A natural fabric, cotton is known for its moisture-wicking abilities, meaning it is great for regulating your overall body temperature. If you have sensitive skin, opt for organic cotton sheets which are both breathable and good for the environment.

Flannel: Synonymous with warmth, flannel is one of the most popular choices for winter bedding. A cross between cotton and fleece, this fabric is soft, airy and breathable, making it the perfect choice for anyone who loves a bed that is warm but not overwhelmingly so.

Fleece: Arguably the warmest material you can choose for your bed sheets, fleece is a synthetic fabric that is ultra-soft and built for insulation. Often used in winter sports gear, fleece is designed to insulate heat in even the coldest conditions, meaning it is ideal for those below-freezing winter nights.

Silk: This may be the last fabric that you would think of when it comes to choosing winter bedding, but silk has the unique ability to retain heat while at same time remaining lightweight and smooth to touch. Opt for pure silk bedding if possible as this has moisturising properties; something that your parched winter skin so desperately needs.



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Chic OR UNIQUE

THE RETURN OF SHABBY CHIC AND HOW TO PULL IT OFF

The revolving circle of décor and design has, over the years, gripped a nation of amateur interior designers. Shabby chic, a style that first came to prominence in the 1980s, is making a concerted return to prominence.

Its invention was as a rebellion to the hard, shiny, ultra-modern, clean-cut image of three decades ago, when yuppies and electronica ruled the roost. The term 'shabby chic' was thought up by fashion journalist Min Hogg.

And the concept hasn't strayed too far since – from distressed furniture to unmatching fabrics and colours, a rustic, rugged essence that's based on comfort and quantity, rather than image and minimalistic posturing.

To achieve the shabby chic look really is to open your imagination, either by pooling existing items or exploring flea markets, thrift stores and antique shops.

Many people think repainting and running a grooved spatula across an old set of drawers is the sum total of shabby chic, but it's about much more than that. Soft background colours flatter furniture and make items the focal point of a room, so think about using whites, beiges or even light greys.

Pastels – baby blues, pale pinks, grainy greys and warm yellows – work best, while that base of brightness means retro, darker shades of wood can match and contrast, be that on tables or chairs. Meanwhile, wicker and throws soften edges and enhance comfort, and wrought iron provides structure.

As far as the walls and surface tops go, flowers, mirrors and pictures using worn frames will assist you in topping off the perfect shabby chic room, with knick-knacks, signs and cushions adding to the mix.

Past that, the only limit is your imagination. And the best thing about shabby chic is that it needn't cost the earth – adding wear and tear to your own items is cheap, if not free.

Photo credit: Spike Powell and Lisa Cohen via idealhome.co.uk



HOME & DIY



DIY Glass art

Nobody likes to look at a big, bare wall, but there are only so many family pictures that one room can take, so why not have a go at this simple, yet stunning, DIY glass wall art? You only need a few basic craft materials and a little bit of creative flair and you are good to go.

YOU WILL NEED

- > Multipurpose, water-based craft paints (small pots) in your preferred colours
- > Masking tape
- > Glue gun
- > 1 glass picture frame
- > Paint brush – soft acrylic or watercolour brushes work well

HOW TO MAKE

- > Ensure the glass within the frame is secure; if not, use a glue gun to stick it in place
- > Allow the glue to fully dry before continuing
- > Mask the edges of the frame and use a clean, dry cloth to dust the glass
- > Decide upon your design – you could use your initial, a flower or a simple inspirational quote
- > If using a stencil, position your chosen design under the glass or go freehand
- > Paint your design in layers, allowing the paint to dry between each coat
- > Once your design is fully dry, remove the masking tape and display proudly on your chosen wall

TOP TIPS FOR PAINTING ON GLASS

- > Always clean the surface before painting
- > Handle the glass carefully to avoid fingerprints
- > Choose the right brush – synthetic brushes can create visible brushstrokes, whereas natural hair brushes allow for more paint to be applied in one stroke and provide a smoother coverage
- > Do not apply too much pressure with your brush
- > Avoid overworking the paint
- > Always blot your brush after rinsing it to eliminate any excess water
- > Clean away imperfections while the paint is still wet, using a wet brush, toothpick or paper towel
- > When the paint has dried, use a razor blade to scrape or trim off any imperfections

OTHER IDEAS FOR DIY GLASS ART:

- > Use markers to write out your favourite quotes
- > Press flowers (two pieces of glass required)

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As film icons go, there are few to rival James Bond; and as Bond actors go, there are none to rival Sir Sean Connery.

In a year that has been unkind on so many levels, fans of film perhaps felt an added sense of injustice at the end of October when it was announced that Sir Sean Connery had passed away, at the age of 90.

Of course, in many respects, the actor's work was done. Connery was the smooth-talking, sumptuously styled Scot who legitimised, developed and truly delivered 007 into the golden era of film. The first man to step into the secret agent's shoes, with 1962's *Dr No*, Connery, a former bodybuilder who finished third in Mr Universe in the early 1950s, proved to author Ian Fleming that he had the fervour and finesse to carry off the role, having previously been dismissed as "an overgrown stuntman".

It seems perverse that someone who would go on to become so decorated in the indulgence and luxury of 1960s cinema may have been cast aside before it even began, but it's fair to note that the actor's previous engagements had been in rather less salubrious guises, notably in crime drama *Hell Drivers*, fantasy adventure *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* and outward-bound action flick *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure*.

That, within a decade, Connery would have elevated his worth from tracking the movements of a man swinging through the jungle to starring in iconic movies such as *From Russia with Love*, *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball* and *You Only Live Twice*, is remarkable.

What made Connery's sumptuously smooth portrayal of Bond so impressive was that, unlike the modern-day 007s, he interspersed international espionage with an array of other lead roles. Seventeen movies were made across the nine years he portrayed Bond, a sequence that ended in 1971 with *Diamonds are Forever* (although he did agree to reprise the character in 1983's *Never Say Never Again*).

"I got to the point where I felt I had nothing left to prove as far as Bond was concerned," said Connery. "It was a delightful run where the evolution of 007 and everything around him had gathered such pace with every new movie; yet in myself I thought I had probably evolved as much as I had wanted, and it was time to let someone else have a go."

Away from Bond, twice-married Connery flourished in the likes of *Murder on the Orient Express*, *A Bridge too Far*, *Highlander*, *The Untouchables*, *The Hunt for Red October* and as Indiana Jones' father in *The Last Crusade*.

There are the ones that got away too – he turned down the role of Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* despite being offered a \$30million bounty; he also rejected playing Architect in *The Matrix* trilogy. The truth is, Connery, who was knighted in the year 2000, was always focused on how he saw himself – as an actor, and as a person... how else can you explain turning down a direct invitation to join Manchester United by legendary manager Sir Matt Busby.

"I was 23 at the time and although I had the contract offer in front of me, I had long decided that football would take a backseat to acting. I felt I had more chance of doing something special, something unique, in the acting world; I felt I could give more and put smiles on more faces, my own included."

Sir Sean, you succeeded.

The Ultimate Bond?



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS



Photo credit-Stratford East-Marc Brenner

Pupils' delight as they win prestigious Olivier opera award

Churchfields Junior School in South Woodford celebrated after the announcement that it had won an Outstanding Achievement in Opera at the 2020 Olivier Awards.

The school was awarded for its participation in the production of *Noye's Fludde* at the Theatre Royal Stratford East in July 2019.

The pupils were among more than 200 young people who took part, joining others from Brampton Primary School, young musicians from Vision RCL's Redbridge Music Service and Newham Music Service, as well as the Royal College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Many people paid tribute to the children's wonderful performance and congratulated them on the award.

Nadia Fall, artistic director of Theatre Royal Stratford

East, said: "I only wish the children could be here because this award is really to celebrate the children's ensemble and so this one's for them."

Musical director Martin Fitzpatrick continued by saying that "all their talent was infectious; they lifted our hearts and they lifted the hearts of our audience. The future is theirs, we hope that they get to perform like this once more. Children, you were brilliant – this award is for you. Fantastic; well done."

Head of Redbridge Music Service, Simon Roberts, said that Redbridge Music Service was delighted to take part.

He said: "We are absolutely thrilled that after being part of such a worthwhile and rewarding project which required hours of preparation and additional work, we received an internationally recognised award."



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Hospice hoping for community support

LOCAL NEWS



Children's hospice in Woodford Green is appealing for support as it takes part in a Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme for the first time.

Haven House Children's Hospice, which cares for seriously ill children and their families, is planning to collect and recycle 500 real Christmas trees to raise money for its vital services.

On January 9 and 10, hospice volunteers will be out and about in the local community collecting real Christmas trees from households in IG7, IG8, IG9, IG10, E18 and E4. The hospice hopes the scheme will help to raise in excess of £5,000.

Ginny Donnelly, Haven House's community fundraiser, said: "To ensure this is a successful event we really need the help of our local community, not only to sign up for the collection but also to volunteer to help over our collection weekend. If you own or have access to a van and can help to collect the trees, or you are an individual and can spare a few hours, please get in touch.

"Additionally, we would be delighted to hear from anyone with access to a chipper who would be happy to volunteer their services to dispose of the trees."

To register for your collection, visit just-helping.org.uk/collections/haven-house-children-s-hospice-woodford-green where you can also make a donation towards Haven House.

Off-licence's bid to extend opening hours rejected

An off-licence in South Woodford has been told it cannot sell alcohol until midnight.

Originally the owners of Woodford Express on George Lane had wanted to sell alcohol until 3am before agreeing to apply for an extension until midnight. But Redbridge Council's licensing subcommittee also refused that application.

Councillor Beverley Brewer represents South

Woodford and told the committee that local residents would object to the application.

She said: "It is important to emphasise that George Lane is not purely a commercial area – its character and strength are derived from the fact that it is a mixed residential and commercial community.

"It would be quite irresponsible to grant an application for the sale of intoxicating liquor so many hours later than anywhere in the vicinity and I do hope that this application will be rejected."

Licensing officers said they thought the application would attract people leaving pubs, encourage drunkenness and lead to an increase in violent crime in the area, which may affect residents.

Woman guilty of falsifying electoral forms escapes jail

A woman from South Woodford has been found guilty of deliberately misleading electors in Hackney during the 2018 local government elections.

Following a trial at Southwark Crown Court, Diana Danescu, 28, was found guilty of 16 offences.

She was sentenced to six months' imprisonment suspended for 18 months and 200 hours' community service. She was also ordered to pay a £2,000 contribution to court costs and a statutory court surcharge.

The conviction follows an investigation by the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) Special Enquiry Team and involved 32 prosecution witnesses during a trial that lasted five weeks.

The court heard that Danescu misled electors in Hackney when canvassing for nominations by providing false information as to the political party she was canvassing for.

Detective constable Jim Morrison of the MPS Special Enquiry Team said: "Diana Danescu deliberately misled the electors of Hackney in the run-up to the local government elections in May 2018. In addition, she submitted names of electors who had not signed the nomination papers. I would like to thank people living and working in Hackney who came forward and provided evidence at the trial."



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Sharing special moments and creating happy memories is what Christmas is all about.

For Anna Rimington and her family, Christmas is an extremely poignant time. Anna's eldest son Joe was born just before Christmas. And, sadly, he died just before Christmas too.

This year, on what would have been Joe's 17th birthday and the first anniversary of his death, Anna has shared in a powerful account how Haven House Children's Hospice has cared for and supported her family during Joe's life and beyond.

Anna hopes their story will encourage the community to donate to their local children's hospice, Haven House, during what has been a particularly challenging year for the charity.

"From almost day one right to the time we said goodbye, the wonderful team at Haven House were by our side — helping us make memories together, providing respite care and giving us a chance to be a family for the nearly 17 years Joe was with us," Anna recalls.

Joe had many medical needs. He suffered catastrophic brain damage at birth. He was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and suffered from regular seizures and scoliosis (curvature of the spine). He was visually impaired and was fed through a tube in his stomach.

Anna continued: "Joe loved it at Haven House. He loved spending time outdoors in the grounds. He loved the peace and tranquillity of the sensory room, with its lights and music. He always looked forward to



the 'big bath'. Joe's middle brother used to call Haven House 'Joe's hotel' — and in some ways it really was."

Joe died peacefully at home last December, with Anna, his brothers and dad Andrew holding him close. Joe was then taken to the hospice's specially designed Butterfly Room where he spent five days allowing his family to be together and to say their goodbyes.

To donate to Haven House this Christmas, head to havenhouse.org.uk/sendastar where you can also leave a special message for the children and families supported by the hospice.

Call to fill in crime survey

A woman from Woodford is urging people to fill in a crime survey so Redbridge Council and the police can tailor services to neighbourhoods and more local people can feel safe.

Residents can have their say on crime and help set the council's community safety priorities by visiting www.engagement.redbridge.gov.uk/strategy/redbridge-crime-survey and taking the survey.

Both organisations wish to hear what crime issues are causing concern and, critically, what suggestions local people have that could help to reduce crime and

violence in their local area.

Sharna Ahmed, 22, lives in Woodford and shared why she completed the crime survey.

She explained: "I feel it is important to contribute towards the development of my local community: Woodford. I am passionate about reducing crime and think this is a great way to influence the council's decision-making and priorities.

"I will be sharing it with my friends and family and encouraging those close to me to get involved so they can have their say, too."



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Woodford and District National Trust



LOCAL NEWS

Dear members, visitors and friends. So here we are with another lockdown and no chance of any communal togetherness, and the likelihood of this continuing well into the new year. However, we are hoping we may join the Zoom trend and possibly bring you a meeting online soon. We are looking into this right now and hope it will happen.

We are determined to do our best to keep the National Trust focus with you all. We will communicate with you by email or phone if this does occur.

We do trust that as soon as we are through this extraordinary time we can have our meetings, visit different places and even holiday too, but we must mention how much we miss the norm of just getting together.

Naturally, our venues, speakers and obviously the National Trust have been affected financially by the events of 2020. We shall carry over our subscriptions from this season to the new year. However, the Trust is desperate for funds, so if any member wishes to make a donation, it will be very gratefully received.

For now, we repeat we miss you all and hope you have as reasonable a Christmas time as we can expect. May 2021 be a time of returning to our normal lives of being able to do what we want, go where we want, when we want.

Best wishes from the National Trust Woodford and District Centre.



Photo Credit Barry Coppock

Rotarians plant crocuses

While the coronavirus has dominated the news, a group of charitable souls remembered that the world is still affected by other diseases.

Members of the Rotary Club of Leytonstone and Woodford marked World Polio Day recently by planting hundreds of crocuses on the central reservation on Broadmead Road, Woodford Green.

Rotary directs its efforts in six areas to enhance local and world impact, and one of these is the eradication of diseases.

The club has planted bulbs on World Polio Day every year since 2015.

You can find more information on the club by going to rotaryleytonstonewoodford.org

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GARDENING

Holly

DECEMBER BIRTH FLOWER
OF THE MONTH

If you were born in the same month as Christmas, your birth flower is the festive holly. A popular plant for the season of winter, holly is instantly recognisable by its prickly leaves and ruby red berries. Plus, it's easy to grow and is great for garden security.

What is the symbolic significance of holly?

In ancient Celtic cultures, the Druids regarded holly as a symbol of fertility and believed it to have magical powers. Today, holly has been adopted as a symbol of Christmas by Christians, with the sharp leaves said to symbolise the crown of thorns worn by Christ and the berries representing his blood.

What does this birth flower say about your personality?

Those born in December are said to be fiercely protective. Not a fan of criticism, you are naturally defensive and are not afraid to stand up for yourself when required. You also love to make a home feel warm and inviting, both your own and those of your friends and family.

How to grow holly in your garden

The holly plant is fairly easy to grow and will thrive in both sun and partial shade, although it prefers moist but well-drained soil. You can choose to grow holly on your lawn, in a shrub border or even to make some hedges. Holly does not require much pruning, although if you want to cut some as a festive decoration, do so in early winter before its berries are eaten by birds.

Interesting facts about holly

- It is evergreen
- It can be grown in pots and containers for up to five years
- The berries are mildly poisonous
- Legend says that holly protects from thunder, lightning and witchcraft
- Real holly plants bloom scented flowers in spring

A GUIDE TO Rose pruning

If you want to ensure that your roses are as happy and healthy as possible, you need to make sure you prune them annually. You can carry out this task any time between November and March, although getting out the clippers in late autumn can help to stimulate new growth over winter.

STEP ONE: DE-HEADING

The first thing you need to do is prune off any dead or fading flowers from your rose bush as this will ensure your bush looks tidy. You can choose to leave every second flower if you want hips to decorate your bushes over winter.

STEP TWO: REMOVE BROKEN STEMS

Now you should look to remove any dead or broken stems and branches from your rose bushes, as a harsh winter could rip them off and cause damage to the healthy stems. Aim to cut any broken or diseased stems at least six inches into healthy wood.

STEP THREE: CUT OUT SUCKERS

Suckers are shoots that grow directly from the rootstock and rob the energy supply from your roses. Therefore, it is vital that you cut out suckers as close to their point of origin as possible. It is also a good idea to seal the area of the cut with some tree wound sealer.

STEP FOUR: CLEAN UP

You must always make sure that you remove all leaves and cut branches from the surrounding area after pruning as you never know what diseases and pests could be lurking in there.

TOP ROSE PRUNING TIPS:

- > Never prune newly planted roses as they need at least one growing season to become established
- > After pruning, spray with lime sulphur to eliminate fungal spores and eggs from pests
- > Use bypass shears rather than anvil blades to achieve a cleaner cut.



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Share
THE WEALTH

Why the Help to Buy: Shared Ownership continues to create homes out of houses

For all its speculation, criticism and conjecture, the housing market represents one of the most stable industries in the UK. Only amid the perils of negative equity in the 1990s did the bricks and mortar of people's fortunes really begin to crumble; yet for large periods outside that time, investment in property has largely been deemed a safe one.

Of course, as a result of this, the market has become much more competitive, and the growing difficulty with which first-time buyers, in particular, are able to get on board means the government's introduction of Help to Buy schemes has gone a long way to guiding people along the footpath to realising those dreams.

The concept is simple – if you cannot afford the mortgage on what would be 100 per cent of a home, Help to Buy: Shared Ownership will allow you to buy a share of the property, which could be anywhere between 25 and 75 per cent of its value.

You would effectively pay rent on the remaining share. This means the initial deposit is smaller and mortgage finance more accessible. On the plus side, owners still enjoy a decent proportion of true investment and, along with that, benefit from rises in market price over time.

The criteria to get involved is sensible. Those applying need to earn less than £80,000/year (£90,000/year in London). Furthermore, you would need to be a first-time buyer, or have owned before while being unable to buy now; or perhaps are in an existing shared ownership arrangement and are looking to move.

Variations to the rules exist for the over-55s and disabled applicants, but for the most part the success of the scheme, which is being repackaged and relaunched for 2021, is evident in the millions of people who have stepped onto the property ladder since its launch four decades ago.



PENSION PARALYSIS

WHY INVESTING NOW MEANS BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

In these uncertain times, our ability to plan for the future has been tested to extremes. Record numbers of homeowners embarked on payment holidays this year as COVID-19 struck, and forward financial plans and projects have been put on hold across the board – much of it on the advice of government... except where pensions are concerned.

The idea of starting a private pension fund is something that would have confronted most adults, and yet still only two-thirds of us are said to be building a reserve that will service us in our retirement.

This lack of forward planning has brought about a concept known as pension paralysis. Many of us will recognise the idea of spending for now – and in many cases this is a

necessity, not a choice – and yet the accumulation of a pension fund, particularly when matched by employer contributions, can have dramatic uplift by the time we bid farewell to the daily grind of full-time employment.

As an example, someone in their thirties earning £35,000/year who manages to put away 20 per cent of their income, and have that matched by an employer, will end up with a pension fund that pays in the region of £1,200/month on retirement.

However, if the decision to begin to put money aside is left until we're in our forties, that drops to less than £850/month, dipping to below £500/month in our fifties.

While pension paralysis in the short term means providing for our home, our children or our social lives, the end effect can mean a drastic impact on our quality of life in retirement.

The advice from government is to put away even a small amount and to get into a routine that means you don't miss that sum coming out each month. Independent financial advisors can guide you on the correct path, while over-50s receive free advice from Pension Wise.



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BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

SHINING LIGHT ON GOOD HEADLAMP ALIGNMENT WHEN DRIVING ABROAD

Having just made the crossing to France and finding ourselves out on the expansive French motorways, many UK drivers would have experienced the strange sensation of a succession of drivers on the opposite carriageway flashing their lights frantically.

No, this isn't a friendly welcome from our continental neighbours, nor is it some kind of automobile backlash resulting from failed Brexit negotiations. Instead, what's happening is that you are blinding other road users with your incorrect headlamp alignment.

In the UK, headlamps are configured to shine to the left, towards the edges of the road and away from the middle. This is to guide motorists away from curbs and ditches, while preventing oncoming drivers from being blinded by our lights.

That means in France, or any country that drives on the right, that same light is actually being shone directly into drivers' faces.

With various advancements in headlamp

technology over the years, new cars are often fitted with a switch control that automatically redirects the headlamps for driving abroad. However, many cars still don't have this function, therefore it pays to know what to do when driving abroad, for both your own safety and that of others.

If manual headlamp realignment cannot be done from the control panel of your car, the most common solution is to buy a set of headlamp unit lenses (or glasses). These deflectors are attached and block out a small amount of your beam, thus keeping light away from other drivers.

These days, it's not a request that headlamps are configured properly, it's the law. 'Do it yourself' beam deflectors – the sort your dad might have made out of black sticky tape in the 1970s – are no longer legal, and deflectors must be operational as soon as you head off the ferry, even in daylight hours.

It's not worth taking the risk when driving abroad... be safe at all times.



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FIRST DIVISION – DECEMBER 26, 1963

SPORT

BLACKPOOL	1-5	CHELSEA
BURNLEY	6-1	MANCHESTER UNITED
FULHAM	10-1	IPSWICH TOWN
LEICESTER CITY	2-0	EVERTON
LIVERPOOL	6-1	STOKE CITY
NOTTINGHAM FOREST	3-3	SHEFFIELD UNITED
SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY	3-0	BOLTON WANDERERS
WEST BROM ALBION	4-4	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
WEST HAM UNITED	2-8	BLACKBURN ROVERS
WOLVES	3-3	ASTON VILLA

'tis the football SEASON TO BE JOLLY

BOXING DAY 1963 – WHEN FANTASY FOOTBALL BECAME REALITY

If there's one thing that's characterised the opening exchanges of the new Premier League season, then it's goals. It seems defence-minded football has been banished to the substitutes' bench and instead our teams are simply aiming to outscore each other.

Though even the likes of Harry Kane, Raheem Sterling, Mo Salah and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang will have to go some if they are to match the achievements of the rugged footballers of old who trotted out onto veritable mud baths of pitches on December 26, 1963.

They wouldn't have known it at the time, but these old-school soccer stars were about to take part in a day of festive football goal gluts, and an afternoon that's gone down in sporting folklore.

In total, 66 goals were scored across the 10 First Division matches. Six sides shared six goals as Chelsea triumphed 5-1 at Blackpool, while

Nottingham Forest and Sheffield United drew 3-3, as did Wolves and Aston Villa.

West Brom and Tottenham trumped that with a 4-4 draw at The Hawthorns, while both Liverpool and Burnley romped to 6-1 home wins, against Stoke City and Manchester United respectively.

Pity those poor fans at Filbert Street and Hillsborough who saw their Leicester City and Sheffield Wednesday sides win by relatively normal 2-0 and 3-0 scorelines (against champions Everton and Bolton Wanderers respectively).

But on a day on which it appears it wasn't just the supporters unable to shake off the large amount of Christmas Day merriment, Blackburn Rovers hit a magnificent eight away from home at West Ham United; and Fulham arguably snatched the ultimate plaudits from a festive flurry of worthy contenders with a magnificent 10 at home to poor Ipswich Town. Jürgen, Pep, Frank, José... over to you.

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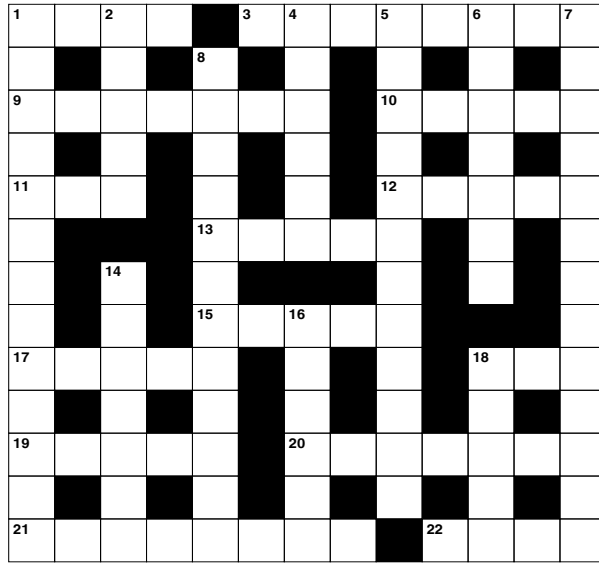
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

- 1. Set of playing cards (4)
- 3. Neck injury (8)
- 9. Genuine (7)
- 10. Kick out (5)
- 11. 17th Greek letter (3)
- 12. The beginning of an era (5)
- 13. Enclosed (5)
- 15. Bird sound (5)
- 17. Turned to ice (5)
- 18. Statute (3)
- 19. Exposes secret information (5)
- 20. Country whose capital is Reykjavik (7)
- 21. Longing (8)
- 22. Refuse to admit (4)

DOWN

- 1. Shamefully (13)
- 2. Showing a willingness to achieve results (3-2)
- 4. Doglike mammals (6)
- 5. Planned in advance (12)
- 6. Sanction (7)
- 7. Unenthusiastically (4-9)



- 8. Food shop (12)
- 14. Proportionately (3,4)
- 16. Banner or flag (6)
- 18. Lessen (5)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Hummingbirds are the only birds that are able to fly backwards
- ▶ The short-horned lizard squirts blood from blood vessels around its eyes when defending itself. This is because the blood vessels rupture under pressure
- ▶ A giant panda will typically eat for around 12 hours a day
- ▶ Elephant ears help to keep the animals cool by radiating heat
- ▶ Young jaguars are blind at birth. They learn to hunt by living with their mother for two years or more
- ▶ Wolves can go for more than a week without eating
- ▶ A fox can communicate with other foxes by using its tail
- ▶ The bald eagle has a wingspan of around eight feet

SUDOKU

							2	9
1	8			2		5		
			5	9		8		
	7	4					8	
			9		6			
	9					6	1	
		2		4	3			
		7		8			4	2
8	4							



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